

I026297CA

-001

## Spurling, Norman

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**From:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Sent:** Monday, April 07, 2014 10:06 AM  
**To:** Spurling, Norman  
**Subject:** FW: Bee Kill Incident

Information on a bee kill incident that occurred last month.

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**From:** Dwinell, Steve [<mailto:Steven.Dwinell@freshfromflorida.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2014 10:26 AM  
**To:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Subject:** RE: Bee Kill Incident

Dave Westervelt will be in touch. His inspectors have seen some of the bees in question and the situation from our perspective is substantially different.

Steven E. Dwinell  
Assistant Director  
Division of Agricultural Environmental Services  
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
850-617-7913  
850-528-5314 cell  
[steven.dwinell@freshfromflorida.com](mailto:steven.dwinell@freshfromflorida.com)  
3125 Conner Boulevard  
Tallahassee Florida 32399

[www.FreshFromFlorida.com](http://www.FreshFromFlorida.com)

Please note that Florida has a broad public records law (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes). Most written communications to or from state employees are public records obtainable by the public upon request. Emails sent to me at this email address may be considered public and will only be withheld from disclosure if deemed confidential pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida.

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**From:** Steeger, Thomas [<mailto:Steeger.Thomas@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2014 12:02 PM  
**To:** Dwinell, Steve  
**Subject:** Bee Kill Incident

*confidential claim  
on p. 9*

Steve,

I returned a voice mail message from a Mr. Bill Rhodes (who is apparently based in Umatilla, Florida); he had called earlier this month to ask whether any surface water monitoring studies are being conducted by EPA in the vicinity of Vero Beach, Florida, where a bee kill had taken place in December 2013. Based on our conversation, Mr. Rhodes is a beekeeper who is part of the petition to ban neonicotinoids and he may also be one of the complainants in the law suit against EPA on the neonicotinoids. He maintains roughly 8,000 colonies and circuits them between California, Florida and North/South Dakota. His bees have just started to arrive back from California almonds. Roughly 6,000 colonies are affected with roughly 20% having died outright. He attributed these losses to application of the insecticide Tourismo (flubendiamide + buprofezin) and the fungicide Tilt (propiconazole) in almond orchards in the vicinity of Fresno, California. Brood/newly emerged bees are continuing to die and according to Mr. Rhodes these losses will impede any efforts to replace lost colonies and will likely limit if not eliminate his ability to produce a honey crop. He strongly believes that his losses, as well as those of other beekeepers, are a result of EPA registering compounds that are clearly toxic to managed and native bees. For the past several years, he has been losing roughly 7,200 colonies, and he

attributes these losses to exposure to pesticides, specifically neonicotinoids. According to Mr. Rhodes, he has sent letters to the former Administrator Lisa Jackson, and he does not believe that any thing has come of his efforts to alert the government. He indicated that he had reported the most recent loss of bees returning from California into Florida to the State of Florida (David Westervelt); however, "they" refused to investigate.

Tom Steeger

Thomas Steeger, Ph.D.  
Senior Science Advisor  
Environmental Fate and Effects Division  
U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (MC 7507P)  
(703) 305-5444 (office)  
[steeger.thomas@epa.gov](mailto:steeger.thomas@epa.gov)

**Spurling, Norman**

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**From:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 09, 2014 6:52 AM  
**To:** Spurling, Norman  
**Subject:** FW: Mr. Rhode's bees

I had a follow-up discussion with Mr. Bill Rhodes on Monday, April 7, where he reiterated that roughly 5600 of his colonies came back to Florida from California almond orchards with 20% dead, 60% with roughly half the colony strength depleted and 20% of the colonies in relatively good shape. The beekeeper expressed concern that the loss may be attributed to exposure to an insect growth regulator used in California and that these residues may still be in the colonies. Mr. Rhodes expressed frustration that the State of Florida only sampled bees for disease and did not sample for pesticide residues. Mr. Rhodes is concerned that suspected residues in his colonies may continue to weaken the colonies.

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**From:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Sent:** Monday, April 07, 2014 10:07 AM  
**To:** Spurling, Norman  
**Subject:** FW: Mr. Rhode's bees

Additional information on the Rhodes bee kill incident.

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**From:** Dwinell, Steve [<mailto:Steven.Dwinell@freshfromflorida.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2014 9:04 AM  
**To:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Subject:** Fwd: Mr. Rhode's bees

- is IO 26298

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Howard, Dennis" <[Dennis.Howard@freshfromflorida.com](mailto:Dennis.Howard@freshfromflorida.com)>  
**Date:** April 1, 2014 at 8:52:59 AM EDT  
**To:** "Dwinell, Steve" <[Steven.Dwinell@freshfromflorida.com](mailto:Steven.Dwinell@freshfromflorida.com)>, "Daiker, Dave" <[Davis.Daiker@freshfromflorida.com](mailto:Davis.Daiker@freshfromflorida.com)>, "Friend, Kelly" <[Kelly.Friend@freshfromflorida.com](mailto:Kelly.Friend@freshfromflorida.com)>  
**Subject:** Mr. Rhode's bees

Davis and I spoke with Dave W. this morning about the conditions of Mr. Rhodes' bees. The disease tests show somewhat elevated loads of deformed wing virus and Israeli acute paralysis virus.

Dave said in general, colonies that went to California strong, returned strong. Some beekeepers who had hives near Bill Rhodes' bees in CA experienced didn't experience the kind of problems Mr. Rhodes did. Additionally, Mr. Rhodes told him that his new bee colonies in new hives that made the trip fared better than did his older hives in old equipment.

Dennis F. Howard, Ph.D.  
Chief, Bureau of Pesticides  
Division of Agricultural Environmental Services  
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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## Spurling, Norman

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**From:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 24, 2014 6:16 PM  
**To:** Spurling, Norman  
**Cc:** Miller, Robert  
**Subject:** FW: Fw: Bees Damaged after almond bloom-Meeting in CALIF MONDAY, March 24th

Additional information on the incident involving bees owned by Mr. William Rhodes (incident number: IO26297-001).

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**From:** RhodesBees@aol.com <RhodesBees@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 22, 2014 9:30 PM  
**To:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Cc:** skegley@pesticideresearch.com; progdirector@pollinatorstewardship.org  
**Subject:** Re: Fw: Bees Damaged after almond bloom-Meeting in CALIF MONDAY, March 24th

Once again I will repeat, my bees had the exact same symptoms that were caused by IGRs and fungicides in California. Please see my email below to refresh what I stated. For them to claim it was a virus, seems nothing but a stall tactic. When I first contacted Dave Westervelt, he had the nerve to tell me the bizarre symptoms were a result of stress . . . really! After 42 years of shipping bees all over the country I know better. I told him it was pesticides, and I later found out that he already knew what had happened in California, but he certainly failed to mention it to me. What is going on? It is very infuriating when our own bee inspector seems to be wasting time looking for excuses to blame bogus factors instead of looking out for the beekeeper and finding out the true problem. And now it seems like our own EPA person, you, think he is doing just fine. I am disgusted!!!  
Bill Rhodes

In a message dated 4/22/2014 9:26:59 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Steeger.Thomas@epa.gov writes:

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

Thank you for your earlier email. Also, I received the voice mail message that you left for me on April 22, 2014. I spoke with Dave Westervelt several weeks ago, and he indicated that his office had inspected your colonies for disease. It is my understanding that similar to other states with apiary inspection programs, Florida evaluates bee kill incidents by first determining whether disease is an issue. If disease has been ruled out, then inspection staff may be called in to evaluate the likelihood that the loss is associated with exposure to a pesticide. This sequence of inspections is not unique to Florida though.

In my discussions with Dave Westervelt, he indicated that the inspection of your colonies resulted in a determination that disease (viral) was the likely cause of the losses; this is consistent with what you relayed in your voice mail message. I recognize your frustration that if disease was the only factor considered, it would be difficult to dismiss the likelihood that pesticides could have contributed to the losses as well.

Your voice mail message indicated that the process followed by Florida works against beekeepers; however, I believe that most states with a similar sequence of inspections believe that their process is based on experience coupled with limited resources.

Again, I appreciate your willingness to share information regarding your losses and this information has been relayed to the Ecological Incident Information System database that is maintained by the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs. I would be interested in learning how your remaining colonies have done now that they have been transferred to northern Florida.

Tom Steeger

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Thomas Steeger, Ph.D.

Senior Science Advisor

Environmental Fate and Effects Division

U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (MC 7507P)

(703) 305-5444 (office)

steeger.thomas@epa.gov

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**From:** RhodesBees@aol.com [mailto:RhodesBees@aol.com]

**Sent:** Monday, April 14, 2014 1:38 PM

**To:** Miller, Robert; Steeger, Thomas; rbireley@cdpr.ca.gov

**Subject:** Fwd: Fw: Bees Damaged after almond bloom-Meeting in CALIF MONDAY, March 24th

This is what my bees were like returning from California. See below.

Bill Rhodes

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From: [RhodesBees@aol.com](mailto:RhodesBees@aol.com)

To: [buffybee@sunlink.net](mailto:buffybee@sunlink.net), [bkbrandi@sbc.global.net](mailto:bkbrandi@sbc.global.net), [gbrandi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gbrandi@sbcglobal.net)

Sent: 3/23/2014 11:44:49 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time

Subj: Fwd: Fw: Bees Damaged after almond bloom-Meeting in CALIF MONDAY, March 24th

Dave-20% of the calif. bee's resemble a beehive. 60% have a 50% reduction in bee population The other 20% are dead after the first inspection. We have crawling sick bees in front of the hives with deformed wings and also a lot with stubs for wings, also dead bees in the cells with their tongues stuck out. The brood patterns have a shotgun look to them. They're also pulling dead pupae out of the hives.. I don't know how many more will die but the 60% that lost 50% of their populations will probably not make honey on the next honey flow or might be dead..I just bought bees from Horace Bell and they were right at \$200 a piece.. I had 4704 hives in the almonds and my foreman Scott Brown had 840 hives. If all the bee's can't be replaced now and we miss the next honey flow it would be a lot more.

Bill Rhodes

rhodes

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From: [buffybee@sunlink.net](mailto:buffybee@sunlink.net)

Sent: 3/21/2014 3:55:13 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

Subj: Fw: Bees Damaged after almond bloom-Meeting in CALIF MONDAY, March 24th

-----Forwarded Message-----

From: Program Director <[progdirector@pollinatorstewardship.org](mailto:progdirector@pollinatorstewardship.org)>

Sent: Mar 21, 2014 1:24 PM

To: [crijpe@gmail.com](mailto:crijpe@gmail.com), 'TJO Bees' <[tjobees@gmail.com](mailto:tjobees@gmail.com)>, Bret Adee <[badeehoney@gmail.com](mailto:badeehoney@gmail.com)>, [buffybee@sunlink.net](mailto:buffybee@sunlink.net), Darren Cox <[coxhoney@gmail.com](mailto:coxhoney@gmail.com)>, Dave Mendes <[davidmendesn@aol.com](mailto:davidmendesn@aol.com)>, Golden Ridge Honey <[grhoney@powerbank.net](mailto:grhoney@powerbank.net)>, JAMES LEWIS FRAZIER <[jfrazier@psu.edu](mailto:jfrazier@psu.edu)>, Jeff Anderson <[jsa.cmhf@juno.com](mailto:jsa.cmhf@juno.com)>, Jim Doan <[jdoan@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jdoan@rochester.rr.com)>, Randy Verhoek <[r.verhoek@harvesthoneyinc.com](mailto:r.verhoek@harvesthoneyinc.com)>, Rick Smith <[beezmans@roadrunner.com](mailto:beezmans@roadrunner.com)>, Steve Ellis <[nhbabsellis@gmail.com](mailto:nhbabsellis@gmail.com)>, Steven Coy <[coy266588@bellsouth.net](mailto:coy266588@bellsouth.net)>, Tim Tucker <[tuckerb@hit.net](mailto:tuckerb@hit.net)>, Walker Honey Company <[clint@walkerhoneyfarm.com](mailto:clint@walkerhoneyfarm.com)>, Zac Browning <[z\\_browning@msn.com](mailto:z_browning@msn.com)>, [beth@bethsbees.com](mailto:beth@bethsbees.com), [rhodesbees@aol.com](mailto:rhodesbees@aol.com), Susan Kegley <[skegley@pesticideresearch.com](mailto:skegley@pesticideresearch.com)>

Subject: Bees Damaged after almond bloom-Meeting in CALIF MONDAY, March 24th

Bees Damaged after Almond Bloom: Meeting March 24

Due to the bee damage experienced after almond bloom Bee Industry leaders will be holding a meeting with EPA representatives in Los Banos, California, Monday, March 24th. The Bee industry is facilitating this field tour with EPA to catalog damages for risk assessment. Beekeepers your attendance is important. If you are unable to attend in person, a conference line will be set-up so you can call in to the meeting. Photos of dead bees/brood or other pertinent information can be e-mailed to <<mailto:bkbrandi@sbc.global.net>> <[bkbrandi@sbc.global.net](mailto:bkbrandi@sbc.global.net)>. Your attendance and participation is very important. Please RSVP to Bob Brandi at <<mailto:bkbrandi@sbc.global.net>> <[bkbrandi@sbc.global.net](mailto:bkbrandi@sbc.global.net)>.

Risk Assessment of Bee Damage after Almond Bloom: a Meeting with EPA representatives and beekeepers

Monday, March 24, 2014

9:00 a.m. PACIFIC time\*

14509 Santa Lucia Ave., Los Banos, California 93635

If you cannot attend in person, you can attend via a conference call:

[REDACTED] enter code [REDACTED]

for additional information contact:

Gene Brandi <<mailto:gbrandi@sbcglobal.net>> <[gbrandi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gbrandi@sbcglobal.net)>

Rick Smith <<mailto:beezmans@roadrunner.com>> <[beezmans@roadrunner.com](mailto:beezmans@roadrunner.com)>

Bret Adee <<mailto:badeehoney@gmail.com>> <[badeehoney@gmail.com](mailto:badeehoney@gmail.com)>

Please RSVP to Bob Brandi at <<mailto:bkbrandi@sbc.global.net>> <[bkbrandi@sbc.global.net](mailto:bkbrandi@sbc.global.net)>.

\*The meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Pacific time, if you are on the conference call that will be 10:00 a.m. Mountain time, 11:00 a.m. Central time, and Noon Eastern time)

\*Personal privacy information\*



Michele Colopy

Program Director

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The Pollinator Stewardship Council's mission is to defend managed and native pollinators vital to a sustainable and affordable food supply from the adverse impacts of pesticides.

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## Spurling, Norman

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**From:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Sent:** Monday, April 28, 2014 5:28 AM  
**To:** Spurling, Norman  
**Cc:** Miller, Robert  
**Subject:** FW: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

Additional information forwarded by William Rhodes on incident I026297.

*updates  
I026297*

Thomas Steeger, Ph.D.  
Senior Science Advisor  
Environmental Fate and Effects Division  
U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (MC 7507P)  
(703) 305-5444 (office)  
steeger.thomas@epa.gov

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**From:** RhodesBees@aol.com [mailto:RhodesBees@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 27, 2014 8:54 PM  
**To:** Steeger, Thomas; davis.daiker@freshfromflorida.com; david.westervelt@freshfromflorida.com  
**Subject:** Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

All the bees were in California pollinating the almonds. Some were exposed to fungicides and IGRs and others were not.  
Below: A healthy bee hive that is not affected.



Another healthy hive with lots of active bees and honey.



Below: An affected hive with dead brood and larvae being drug out.  
Dead bees in front of the hive.



Below: Another affected hive with lots of dead bees and larvae in the grass.





Bottom board of an affected hive with a bunch of dead bees there and on the ground.



Still another affected hive with lots of dead bees in the sand in front of the hive.  
Sickening to see this happening to my bees.



## Spurling, Norman

---

**From:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Sent:** Monday, April 28, 2014 8:38 AM  
**To:** Spurling, Norman  
**Cc:** Miller, Robert  
**Attachments:** Fwd: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.; Re: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

*File does not have  
photos - N. Spurling  
USEPA*

Additional information forwarded by William Rhodes on incident I026297.

Thomas Steeger, Ph.D.  
Senior Science Advisor  
Environmental Fate and Effects Division  
U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (MC 7507P)  
(703) 305-5444 (office)  
steeger.thomas@epa.gov

## Spurling, Norman

---

**From:** RhodesBees@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, April 28, 2014 8:30 AM  
**To:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Subject:** Fwd: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

Response from Dave Hackenberg to my pictures. His bees went to California then to Georgia and he is having the same problems. Obviously California is the common denominator.  
Bill Rhodes

---

From: buffybee@sunlink.net  
To: RhodesBees@aol.com, kenbell@cphlaw.com, vic@vicsherlaw.com, skegley@pesticideresearch.com, johnstonhoney@aim.com  
CC: beezmans@roadrunner.com, badeehoney@gmail.com, clintwalker3@gmail.com, coxhoney@gmail.com, buffybee@sunlink.net, davidmendesn@aol.com, gbrandi@sbcglobal.net, hansengeo@gmail.com, jff2@email.psu.edu, jsa.cmhf@juno.com, jdoan@rochester.rr.com, jfrazier@psu.edu, grhoney@powerbank.net, r.verhoek@harvesthoneyinc.com, coy266588@bellsouth.net, nhbabsellis@gmail.com, tuckerb@hit.net, z\_browning@msn.com  
Sent: 4/27/2014 9:48:03 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time  
Subj: Re: Fwd: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

Seeing same things. They were worst the first couple weeks back in Georgia 20+% died and some seemed to get a little better and then when you thought some of them were coming out it (whatever) the next time we checked them maybe a week or 10 days the same colonies that seemed to be improving went backwards maybe losing 2 to 3 frames of bees. They would be pulling out brood again and would find dead bees on bottom board and on ground. Got these bees back to Pennsylvania now with lots of good spring pollen and nectar as well as supplement feed both sugar syrup and protein patties and a week ago put 2nd boxes on some that we had put back to singles that seemed to be growing and late this week went back and checked them and some of them again lost 2 to 4 frames of bees in the last week and some even completely gone. Make you want to pull your hair out. Can't hardly make an plans with these colonies

Dave

PS I copied NHBAB

-----Original Message-----

From: RhodesBees@aol.com  
Sent: Apr 27, 2014 9:00 PM  
To: kenbell@cphlaw.com, vic@vicsherlaw.com, skegley@pesticideresearch.com, buffybee@sunlink.net, johnstonhoney@aim.com  
Subject: Fwd: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

This is what is happening to my bees.

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From: RhodesBees@aol.com  
To: steeger.thomas@epa.gov, davis.daiker@freshfromflorida.com, david.westervelt@freshfromflorida.com  
Sent: 4/27/2014 8:54:22 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time  
Subj: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

All the bees were in California pollinating the almonds. Some were exposed to fungicides and IGRs and others were not.

Below: A healthy bee hive that is not affected.

Another healthy hive with lots of active bees and honey.

Below: An affected hive with dead brood and larvae being drug out.  
Dead bees in front of the hive.

Below: Another affected hive with lots of dead bees and larvae in the grass.

Bottom board of an affected hive with a bunch of dead bees there and on the ground.

Still another affected hive with lots of dead bees in the sand in front of the hive.

Sickening to see this happening to my bees.



## Spurling, Norman

---

**From:** RhodesBees@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, April 28, 2014 8:25 AM  
**To:** Steeger, Thomas  
**Cc:** buffybee@sunlink.net; miksa hf@aol.com  
**Subject:** Re: Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.  
**Attachments:** removed.txt

These pictures were taken April 23, 2014, a month after my bees returned from California. The problem is ongoing and these are pictures of how the bees are doing now. These are the colonies that were relocated to north Florida. I now am personally at my expense having tests run on these bees for pesticides.

Just about all my bees went to California and started returning around the middle of March. I started noticing some problems immediately and contacted Dave Westervelt about an apparent pesticide problem in my bees. Eight days after my initial contact he came and checked only for viruses.

See the following email from Dave Hackenberg, to whom I also sent my pictures.

Bill Rhodes

In a message dated 4/28/2014 5:51:24 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Steeger.Thomas@epa.gov writes:

Dear Mr. William Rhodes,

Thank you for the pictures of affected colonies; the pictures will be included in the incident report on your losses (incident Identification Number: I026297). Are these pictures of colonies at the time they returned from California?

When we initially spoke by phone on March 21, 2014, you indicated that a portion of the colonies returning from California were being relocated to northern Florida to forage on gallberry and palmetto. How are the colonies doing that were relocated to northern Florida?

Tom Steeger

Thomas Steeger, Ph.D.

Senior Science Advisor

Environmental Fate and Effects Division

U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (MC 7507P)

(703) 305-5444 (office)

steeger.thomas@epa.gov

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**From:** RhodesBees@aol.com [mailto:RhodesBees@aol.com]

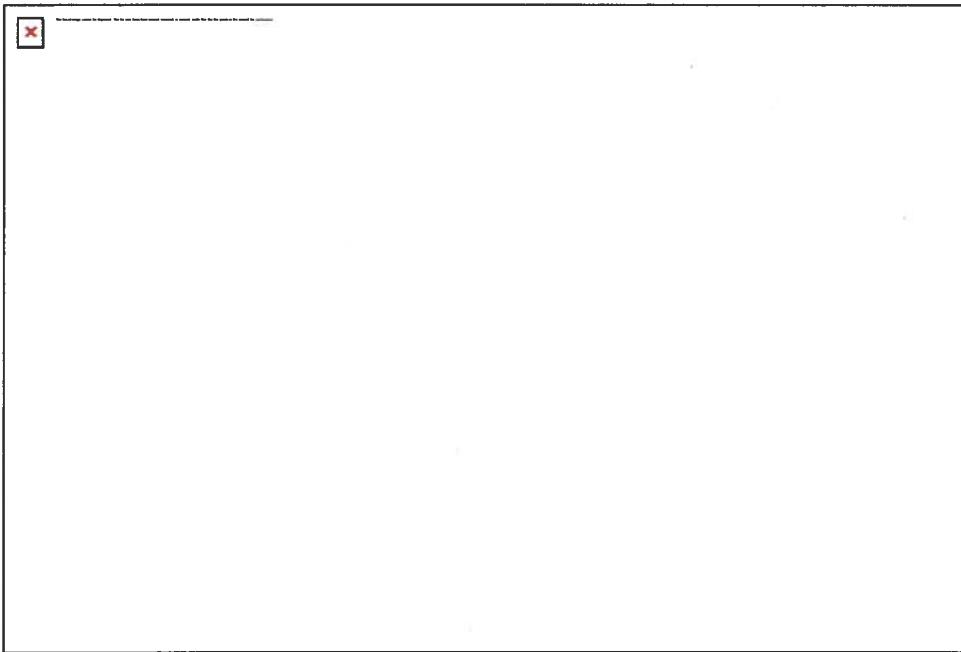
**Sent:** Sunday, April 27, 2014 8:54 PM

**To:** Steeger, Thomas; davis.daiker@freshfromflorida.com; david.westervelt@freshfromflorida.com

**Subject:** Photos of healthy beehives and dying beehives.

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